The COMMONWEAL

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Editors: EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.
PHILIP BURNHAM (*now on duty with the armed forces*)

HARRY LORIN BINSSE, *Managing Editor;* MICHAEL WILLIAMS, *Special Editor;* C. G. PAULDING, *Literary Editor;* JOHN BRUBAKER, *Advertising Manager.*

Bellicose Congress

AS WE go to press the preliminary steps in the organization of the 78th Congress are just being taken; Speaker Rayburn has been reelected by the expected narrow margin, and a lot of individual congressmen and senators have made warlike remarks, most of them directed against the executive department of our government, if not specifically against the President. Doubtless a great deal of this is sound and fury—at least we hope so, for the widespread tone of reaction cannot but disturb people of progressive sympathies, whether or not they specifically favor the New Deal. There is much fruitful work for our enlarged opposition to accomplish, but it does not lie in the simple undoing of everything which has been done under the New Deal, and in a simple return to the economic past. Nor would such obscurantism politically serve the best interests of the Republican Party, for it could set in motion a vehement reaction against the "reaction" of last fall's mandate at the polls.

End of Food Stamp Program

SECRETARY WICKARD'S announcement that the Administration's device of distributing surplus foods to low-income families would be discontinued for the duration provides a good occasion for summarizing its achievements. The program is currently operating in every state but West Virgina. At its peak it was helping 4,000,000 people and since it opened on a small scale in 1939 it has reached some 20,000,000 Americans. It is impossible to fix the extent of the program's achievements, but one indication is the nourishing and health-giving food that formed the bulk of the $245,000,000 worth distributed—eggs, butter, flour, corn meal, pork, lard, fresh and dried fruits and vegetables. It developed gradually and without much fanfare but it is unquestionably one of the Department of Agriculture's most successful projects. Now that many of the food surpluses are gone, it is good to know that the Department intends to reinstate the program when the wherewithal and the need return.

Possibly even more valuable than the solid achievement of finding a market for otherwise unsaleable farm produce and distributing nourishing food to those who need it most is the experience it has afforded in the handling of food surpluses on a large scale. The nation had had plenty of practice salting away vast quantities of cotton, corn and wheat in grain elevators, silos, warehouses and the circular galvanized-iron corn cribs which dot the fertile Iowa landscape. But actually getting surpluses in the hands of the ultimate consumer is another story. The feeding problems which the United States now faces are staggering. To begin with there are the armed forces, with over a million men on foreign shores. Then there are liberated territories such as vast stretches of North Africa, where the demand for American food rapidly grows. There are the conquered European countries too. We still have surpluses of certain commodities—grain and cotton; Latin America, notably the Argentine, has a great accumulation of meats. There is a magnificent opportunity of getting this food where the need is greatest. Department of Agriculture experience with the Food Stamp program should be invaluable as our international feeding activities expand during the war and armistice periods, and are again required at home during the difficult period of demobilization—or with a bow to the latest Brookings report—shortly thereafter.

A Peace of Plenty

NOT because victory is in sight or the war is virtually won, but because American industrialists have made such strides with the task of production, they are now turning to domestic post-war plans. The leading group, the Committee for Economic Development, projects a greatly stepped up American peacetime economy with jobs for 55,000,000 workers. This is a great advance over the economics of scarcity which has previously governed our thinking in these matters. It is good to have progressive industrialists taking the lead in setting up now the main outlines of

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economic procedure for the demobilization period. That must be done much beforehand. And other aspects of their preliminary pronouncements show real promise. Notably the practicality of working out the plan from the viewpoint of specific industrial localities—the first three: Peoria, Reading and Wheeling. And right at the outset the Committee is willing to recommend lengthening the period for unemployment benefit payments during the transition period. The group also includes certain college professors, in a consultative capacity, at least, who would tend in a progressive direction. But why do they not go further to manifest the disinterestedness of their point of view and assure greater success for their efforts by adding to their group genuine representatives of labor and the farmer? We should also like to know their ideas on America's international economic relations.

Dirty Politics

NO ONE would expect Mr. George E. Sokolsky to be an enthusiastic supporter of anything except *status quo ante* capitalism. However much one may disagree with his point of view, he has an eminent right to express it, but when in so doing he grossly distorts historical truth, some small voice of protest is in order. In his column for January 4 he argues that the general social program of the New Deal is bad because when Germany tried something of the same sort, "from 1881 to 1891," millions of people preferred to leave Germany and come to "capitalistic America." Mr. Sokolsky so distorts the facts as to make it seem that the enlightened social policy of Bismarck, continued by William II, was principally responsible for the huge German emigration of the nineteenth century. This misrepresentation of truth can easily be corrected by consulting almost any textbook for modern European history. The middle and late eighties saw the enactment of substantially all Bismarck's social legislation. Here is what happened to emigration: "Emigration, which had been heavy in the middle of the nineteenth century and which still amounted in the 1880's to a quarter of a million annually, decreased steadily after 1890 until in the years just before the world war it averaged about 25,000. Industrialized Germany was nourishing an ever larger population and contenting it to remain at home" (Hayes, "A Political and Cultural History of Modern Europe"). In other words, what happened was precisely the opposite of what Mr. Sokolsky tells his readers. Once the Bismarckian social program had had a few years to establish itself, had become a going concern, German emigration markedly declined. Mr. Sokolsky says nothing about the hopeless rigidity of social classes in central Europe; he says nothing about the *Kulturkampf;* he says nothing about the suppression of Socialists and repression of minorities. He would have us believe that sickness, accident, old age insurance, maximum hour laws and laws for the protection of working women and children—he would have us believe that this and all the rest of the German social progress of the eighties was what drove German people from their homes to seek surcease in an America of "the railroad barons and the trusts and the Rockefellers and Morgans and Carnegies . . ."

George Washington Carver

THE LIFE STORY of our generation's best known Negro scientist, Dr. George Washington Carver, has so often been told, because of the many picturesque details which surround it, that there is no need of summarizing it again. He is dead, at the age of 78, covered with honors and high in the esteem of all those who know anything about him. His scientific research, mostly in the field of agriculture and of new uses for plant products, has incalculably benefited his country, and he himself has furnished us with a living proof that the color of a man's skin and his previous condition of servitude are no bars to a life of high moral and intellectual distinction. R.I.P.

N.B.

"IT IS welcome news . . . that the National Committee on Food for the Small Democracies, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York, has reopened its efforts to extend the program now in use in Greece to the women, children and unemployed men in Belgium, Holland, Norway, Poland and other occupied countries and to increase the volume of food going to Greece. The success of the partial relaxation of the blockade policy of the United Nations in the case of Greece should open the door to its complete revision. Such a move now has the endorsement of the Federal Council of Churches, the Foreign Missions Conference and the United Council of Church Women." (From "Starvation Can Be Halted," *Christian Century,* January 6.)

N.B.

FROM the *Call,* of Kansas City, Missouri: "Birmingham (ANP). Donald Rasmussen, white professor at Talladega college, his wife, and Louis Burnham, local Negro educator, were fined $25 each and court costs for eating together at a Negro café. The Negro restaurant owner, Mrs. Nancy Williams, was fined $50 and costs. Their conviction, before Police Judge Henry J. Martin, was for violating the city segregation code prohibiting members of the two races eating in the same café. Mr. Rasmussen said he was aware of the racial attitudes of the South but did

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not know it was against the law for white people to eat in Negro restaurants."

Expediency

IT HAS been said here before and it is necessary to say it here again: on the day that American troops landed in French Africa the ideologies and the plans of the United Nations came into contact with certain European physical and political realities. Our relations with a French colonial administration and with a liberated department of France itself (Algeria) and with the officers and men of French armed forces were the close relations of actual contact—we fought against the French and we are fighting now with the French—and these relations were seen as a test case and an indication of what we would do when the time comes and we are in Italy, in France, in Germany. What happened when we landed is not fully known to the public, but in the main it may be said that we used whatever useful accomplices we had been able to prepare or that we found, accidentally or not, available. It may also be said that if we had not been able to use these forces or if we had refused through principle to use them—for they were not democratic forces—we would not, in Africa, even be where we are. And so our action was explained and justified on the grounds of expediency and this interpretation not unnaturally dismayed a great many of us. Sacrifice of principle for expediency is never in the end expedient. But did we sacrifice a principle and are we going on into the war and through the war, into combat and into victory and into the peace after victory, unprincipled, untrusted, and disillusioning all those in America and abroad who know that this war is more than a war between armies?

The question is not rhetorical. There is a real danger that this is what in fact we have done and will do. There is a real danger that the power of conscious and unconscious fascists abroad and in this country will endure throughout this civil war and determine and ruin the peace after the war. There is a real danger that the men who are waiting for the fatigue this war will bring to this country, in order to cancel all social reform and arrest all social progress, will succeed in enforcing our withdrawal from a world effort toward a just order. There is a real danger that the reactionary classes of all nations will unite. There is a specific and immediate danger that interests, such as those of the de Wendels, now in North Africa, will merge with similar interests here, and that first the French industrialists and then the German industrialists will find accomplices in this country and the war will have been fought to preserve heavy industry throughout the world and the peoples of the world will have fought for freedom in vain. There are these evil forces in all countries—this is a civil war—and they are active, doubtless, in the political situation in North Africa, but in all countries there is also a determined opposition to these forces and in all countries there is the hope that these forces can be destroyed. Since, however, they are nothing but the contemporary embodiment of selfishness, greed and arrogance, the conflict will be a lengthy one and the triumph never total.

The world is too much with us; late and soon, and this is a principle as useful to recall as many another. Robespierre forgot it and he is dead. Its corollary is this: a nation's foreign policy can never express any one force within the nation, to the exclusion of other and conflicting forces, even if the first be the best force, morally, within the nation. A nation which has not reduced to impotence the evil forces that are within it cannot have the selfless aims of an individual hero. A nation which has not solved in justice the problems of its Negro citizens cannot without hypocrisy pretend to liberate captive races elsewhere. A nation depending on time and orderly process for gradual improvement, a reformist nation, can give its support only to certain types of national revolutions and not to international revolution. Believing greatly in law and order, such a nation, our own, will be very much worried at upsetting law and order anywhere under any but the most obviously advantageous circumstances.

This is why our policy in Africa has dismayed those who have a clear and admirable and revolutionary plan and who believe that the face of the world can be changed at one stroke. But this also is why our policy has betrayed nothing but our own imperfection and perfectibility, nothing but our own slow struggle, our own inconsistency, our own mixed motives, our good will, our timidity and our prudence. I can understand the disappointment this has meant to all that is best, intransigent and noble in the hearts of many who have followed de Gaulle in France and out of France. I can measure the hopes it has aroused in the minds of reactionaries all over Europe who are saying now that America is not the revolutionary menace which they feared. I can understand that our action in Africa will make many people despair and revert to the old dilemma: fascism or communism. And it is sad that things can never be clear cut, nor virtue uncompromising, save in the individual man; it is sad that the struggle must be endless and ever renewed; it is sad that we—the nations, the great collectivities—must advance step by step and always uncertain. But it is well that the world knows now, and we ourselves, that no nation alone can be the Liberator of Europe and that freedom can come only through the action of men in all nations who desire it above all. C. G. PAULDING.

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Parousia, 1943

The forgotten wealth of meaning in the feast of the Epiphany.

By **H. A. Reinhold**

PAROUSIA is a strange term of Greek origin unknown to the general Catholic public. Even those who read about it once in a great while in books on our Catholic liturgy are quite a bit at a loss as to its meaning, and yet it is one of the "fullest" terms of our Christian language. Simply explained it means the "Presence" of Christ on the Last Day, His Second Coming. But it means this in all its connotations and implications, and it is in this wide range of signification that I have called it "full."

In order to understand it well we have to recall a great many things which have slipped out of the minds of the average modern Catholic and which will have to be retrieved in painful labor, especially from the liturgical documents of the Church, from the Acts of Martyrs, from early Christian writers and, above all, from the New Testament. This scientific work has been done by the well-known scholar, Dom Odo Casel, a Benedictine monk of the now suppressed abbey of Maria Laach in the Rhineland. To him we owe the careful investigation which enables us now to speak of parousia in an easy, more popular way. This conception, especially in its liturgical realization, is very fruitful for all those who want to reach a profound understanding of the liturgy of the Church, and of her sacramental life. It is the key to a great many of its present problems. Much of it is now for the multitude either a venerable relic or a quaint garment of things that are unrelated to our modern spiritual lives.

In the first place, we have to make one indispensable change in our common attitude toward Christ's Second Coming. We have inherited from the high Middle Ages an attitude that is almost exclusively one of fear. Jacopone da Todi's *"Dies irae, dies illa"* is as eloquent a witness of this feeling as Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" in the Sistine Chapel. It is a feeling of terror and fright. The terrible day of wrath and revenge. *"Quid sum miser tunc dicturus."* "What shall I wretched one then say?" All the consolation of redemption seems to have gone from the grand fresco in the Papal chapel. Even Mary is stricken with terror and cowers in fear. Peter clutches his keys and holds them up, terror in his eyes. Before a pope of the post-Renaissance had a second-rate artist paint clothes on Christ and the saints the stark nudity made this great painting a still more horrifying sight.

No wonder we would rather not hear too much of the Parousia except in a mission or retreat, when these visions are used to instill in us a wholesome terror and a consequent aim to work out our salvation in fear and trembling. Great ascetics in every century have recommended the day of reckoning to our frequent consideration, for our love of God and of good is so weak that we need the whip of possible damnation to keep us on the narrow path or bring us back to it. Christ's own parables are not squeamish in their language of warning.

Yet it was He who said: "Lift up your heads, because your redemption is near." From the Apostles on, especially through Peter's and Paul's Epistles and John's Apocalypse, the prevailing spirit is one of longing for the great day of Christ's return: "Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus." In every vigil celebration, especially the "Great Night" of Easter Saturday and of the Ember Saturdays, Christians, Catholics, dedicated themselves to the celebration of this spirit of longing expectation for Christ's second coming, His Parousia. These night-long vigils, now anticipated on Easter Saturday mornings, had their climax in what was then called simply the "Great Mysteries," now briefly, the Mass. In it Christ became present, first spiritually in the Gospel, and after that, sacramentally under the symbols of bread and wine to nourish His faithful for another period of expectation. Every one of these vigils, of these watches in the night till the sun rose over the Sacred Species on the altars of Christendom, these fasts, these celebrations of singing and reading were little "Parousias."

The element of fear was, of course, there too, since only perfect love is able to throw it out (Saint John). But above this there was hope and longing and joy. Our individualism makes us think about nothing but our own soul and its salvation. Without succumbing to collectivism and its sinister consequences, our fathers had a more communal attitude and a fuller consciousness of being members of a whole, the *Ecclesia Christou;* of being the ones who had been called from out of the mass of mankind to be living members of the Anointed One, the Christ. The fate of this Christ, of His

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Body, was what supremely filled their minds and, seeing themselves as the People of God, the homebound ship of Christ, what was more natural for them than to see their King return to His people and the ship anchored in its eternal harbor?

How did it happen that succeeding generations gradually slipped into a sectional, partial view of this great mystery? How did we lose our otherworldliness from our philosophy of life, we might ask?

There are several reasons which deserve mention. The history of the sociological and psychological development of piety has not yet been written from the viewpoint of correct scientific research and in the spirit of faith. There are only scattered observations in books of history and sociology, written mostly, however, by non-Catholics. Yet, while the dogmatic and liturgical structure has been preserved intact by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, there are many facts that point to the emphasis having shifted from a total, communal, Christocentric attitude to the present popular one of sectional, individualistic and anthropocentric sentiment. This is not surprising. We are still trying to live down an attitude toward the Holy Eucharist which suffered from the same cause, although Pope Pius X promulgated his courageous Communion decrees almost forty years ago. While the letter of these decrees was obeyed, their spirit still finds it difficult to assert itself in our convents and parishes.

What then were the reasons for the loss of the fulness of the Parousia? There is, first, the lapse from the Church of the martyrs to the powerful institution of after 313 A.D., with its mass conversions and its lowering of standards which then had to be rescued and preserved in the monastic orders and the liturgical books. Once opportunists and people "born with a church" forming part of their civic life became a majority, enthusiasm, the mother soil of the Parousia spirit, and high moral standards, its atmosphere, were watered down. The saltiness of the Faith, which Christ had given as a condition for its survival, had to be preserved in reservations: the celibate clergy, the monastic orders and the poor. The art of making of earth as comfortable a place as possible and still retaining a minimum of religion developed more and more for the average man of means in all walks of ecclesiastical life.

Those masses could not be moved by enthusiasm and love, so they had to be moved by fear, and fear was what they got from their worried shepherds. No wonder that the Parousia was scarcely seen in its full outline. We really know only the things that impress us and are part of our lives. A vision that does not materialize in our pattern of life fades into theory, to which we may pay eager lip-service, but which will not be an "existential truth," a truth integrated into our person.

Another reason is the growing ignorance of the masses in the dark ages and their crude way of thinking. Anything as complex as the full conception of the Parousia would have to be ignored, and the nearby whip of fear was more important in the laborious and gradual education of Franks and Celts and Saxons, Burgundians and Slavs and Magyars.

Thirdly, there seems to be a certain relish in gloom among Nordic nations, whether Celtic or Germanic or Slavic. None of their native religions is characterized by serene and light traits, and they were products of their national characters. No wonder that this component of their character should linger on until our own day. It was the North that forced black vestments on the Church for funerals, not Rome, where the Pope alone still wears purple at the Requiem. These little, apparently unimportant things show the general drift of thought. The fierce, bloody times from the collapse of the Empire to the disasters of the late Middle Ages, may also have something to do with it. Yet, no one can say that it was all sweetness and glory before; certainly not during the first three hundred years. The real explanation is probably that the spiritual conquest of disastrous happenings requires greater maturity and Christian integration than the young convert nations possessed, while antiquity had a natural heritage of wisdom, on which grace built its lofty edifice.

The great hindrance

The great hindrance in the way of grasping this idea of triumph and joy, of victory in death, of resurrection, was of a different kind after the Renaissance: scepticism, growing material wealth, secularism, "this-worldly" utopias, bourgeois optimism and trust in the endless progress of civilization. All these hindered the already weakened seed of a complete and total faith from maturing. The very idea of faith as the dynamo, not the soothing drug of life; the burning spirit of propulsion, instead of the consoling cushion for the deathbed; this very idea was faint. No wonder nobody saw any stirring message in the Parousia! As a matter of fact, apart from the Church's adamant teaching of it and the longing of a few saints and holy people, who wanted Christ to come back and make an end of it all? What was the Kingdom of Heaven to men who were either plainly secularized or, if spiritual, interested only in individual souls, and I say "souls" instead of men, women and children?

And yet we have an enormous and living monument of this spirit of the Parousia in our midst, of the Coming of the Lord. It is the feast of the Epiphany and the things built around it. If we learn to celebrate, to "realize" it, its fulness will again transform our souls and counteract the

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human obstacles that have heretofore stood in its way.

The feast of the Epiphany, in our modern popular estimation, takes only second place after Christmas. As a matter of fact it has been degraded to the feast of the "Three Wise Men," as if it were nothing but that. What is it in fact?

A feast is best understood by the mysteries it contains, as they are found in its liturgical texts. Now this very feast has one antiphon which summarizes its content. It is the antiphon of the *Benedictus,* the hymn of Zachary which the priestly choirs sing at sunrise in the hour of Lauds before Mass is celebrated. "Hodie Coelesti Sponso . . ." "Today the Church is being united to the Heavenly Bridegroom, as in Jordan Christ washes off her sins, the Magi come running with gifts to the royal wedding, and the guests feast on wine made out of water." We find this same thought in a rimed version in the hymn sung at sundown during the Vesper hour. Thus, we discover three motifs in this feast: the visit of the Magi, Christ's baptism by Saint John in the Jordan, and the wedding feast of Cana. As a matter of fact these three Gospels are actually read during the celebration of the feast, on January 6th and 13th and on the first Sunday after January 13th. It is probable that originally they were read more closely together. There is normally one Sunday between January 6th and 13th. The Gospel for this Sunday (now suppressed by the Feast of the Holy Family) shows us the boy Jesus in the temple, enthroned (see the Introit in your Missal) among the wise elders of His nation, questioning and teaching them.

The connecting thought or ideal unity of all four of these Gospels is the manifestation of the Godhead in Christ to the Magi, to the elders, to His forerunner, and finally to His apostles in His first miracle (Cana). This feast apparently came from Alexandria in Egypt, where it was first known to be celebrated. That accounts for its richness, its profundity and its subtlety of composition. To us it seems a far cry from "manifestation" to "heavenly wedding" and yet those of us who read our Old Testament understand what it means when it says: "Adam *knew* Eve," "Abraham *knew* Sara," or "David did not *know* the Sulamites." Does not even the New Testament say of Joseph: "and he did not know her (Mary) till she had brought forth her firstborn son" (Matt. 1, 25)? In the profundity of Greek and Oriental minds the progresses of cognition and generation, though in different spheres, were alike. Creative joy connotes both. So, when God "manifests" Himself to His chosen among men and to the world alike, in tremendous miracles; when He and man *know* each other in Christ, the Infant, the Boy, the Man, the Power, then this is indeed a wedding.

If you will take the pains to consult your Missal and your Short Breviary (I hope you have one), you will see the sparkling, precious richness the Church has poured out on this occasion in her hymns, introits, graduals, antiphons and psalms. It is superabundant and truly majestic.

The key to this mystical composition, this full reality, the symbolic guide, is the seasons before and after, especially those two thundering Sundays (the last after Pentecost; the first of Advent) which have as their Gospels the announcement of the Parousia. They are prophecy, spoken by Christ. January 6th and its companions in this constellation are the "pre-reality," the pledge that the Parousia is true, is real, because God has already manifested Himself, and His Godhead shone through one human Life in four symbolic visions. Take your Missal and Short Breviary again and read the texts, the antiphons, the epistles, the hymns from the Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost on, and see the gradual swelling of a wave of hope and joy and expectation. It is a mighty, distinct chorus in Advent. The great prelude is given on Christmas, and we rest for a while in the Incarnation. But this is not yet the terminus. Like a theme of Beethoven, the mighty motif asserts itself with renewed force until it breaks out in full splendor on the day of *Theophania.* Its joy, its richness, its triumph show us what our true calling is. Christ the Victor. "Arise, be light, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold darkness shall cover the earth and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Light, the star, wine, the bride and bridegroom, water, the *cathedra* in the temple, the three gifts, all these express joy and richness. It is the richness of Christ's coming. No mere statement in so many words can convey all the aspects of the kaleidoscopic deployment of what we contemplate with longing and love: Parousia, Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus.

To Ingeline

What love you had for me I've killed, of course,
Due to what mercies I need not reveal.
No longer say familiar prayers, and feel
That I am near, and that our love's a force
Of sinews yet. For I'm away, and worse,
I'm foreign now, and strange. You cannot steal
Into my heart again. I'm gone. A peal
Of laughter still. And quite without remorse.
You'll see me in some torn communique,
And not before. After our friendship gets
The long divorce of steel, and all the debts
Of bankrupt honor have been paid away,
Why,—cry you mercy. Weep you for April still?
April's a brew you cannot redistil.

Lt. S. V. Morris.

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"They're in This Nation"

From Memphis to Mobile and a lot of way stations.

By **Harry Lorin Binsse**

PEOPLE, and very well intentioned people at that, often talk about the "Negro problem" in a sort of lump fashion, as though there were thirteen million Americans with black skins, all very much alike and all embraced in a single tangle. And yet a moment's reflection tells us that the hundred twenty million "whites" differ tremendously from each other, perhaps even more than some whites differ from some Negroes. This is so self-evident, because of the great variety of national origins among our white citizens, that we forget the natural variety likely to exist within every social group. And Negroes have perhaps more than their share of variety. The more you learn about the differences among Negroes themselves, the more you realize that there really is not a specific "Negro problem," isolated from all other human problems, and soluble by itself, but that the whole question is a part of our general American social complex, and that only by approaching it, looking at it, thinking of it in such terms is there any hope, however vague, that it may some day dissolve. "To know and understand and love the Negro is not enough. One must know and understand and love the white man as well."

That last sentence is very nearly the conclusion of a remarkable and neglected book, published with no sounding of trumpets in the fall of 1942. It is "No Day of Triumph" and its author is J. Saunders Redding, at present head of the department of English in the State Teachers College, Elizabeth City, North Carolina (Harper, $3.00). Mr. Redding has written what seems to me almost the first really distinguished treatment of Negro life in America. What might easily have been a dull, massive and wholly unavailing sociological study has been transmuted into a work of art which, potentially at least, can be of tremendous significance in creating the understanding which we as a nation so conspicuously lack. This metamorphosis is effected by the happy magic of poetic writing, of a real feeling for people, for words, for things.

Perhaps this is why Mr. Redding's work has attracted little attention so far. He has produced dynamite, and there are a lot of vested interests which must be understandably annoyed and frightened and which must be doing their best to prevent the dynamite from circulating. Probably very few professional Negroes—and there are plenty of professional Negroes, just as there are professional Democrats or professional Catholics—will like this book one bit. It makes things too complicated. It undermines and purges the simple propagandas. The propagandas simple enough to imprint themselves on the public mind. Anti-lynching, anti-poll tax, fair employment practices, equal educational advantages, better public health services. I do not mean in any way to slur devoted men and women who have given their lives (and who thereby earn their livings) to promoting these causes. The causes are good in themselves. Nor need they necessarily be focused upon the Negro. Discrimination in employment is something which at one time or another has been suffered by every ethnic or cultural group in America. The Irish have suffered from it. People with unpronounceable names still suffer from it. The Jews always have suffered from it. In the same way better public health, equal educational opportunities, all the other things are just as good and useful to white people or to Indians or to Chinese as they are to Negroes. So that it would be rank ingratitude to suggest that any people of any color who sacrifice themselves in an attempt to win such things for their fellow men are of no account. Yet people who dedicate their lives to causes become "professional," and have their occupational diseases of the mind. A book like Mr. Redding's cannot sit easy with them.

It is also necessary to utter a word of warning. "No Day of Triumph" is not, and emphatically not, a book for a reader who is unwilling to identify himself emotionally with those about whom he reads. Its subject matter is truth, and the truth can be very ugly. Here we have presented to us, along with the fineness and the good estate of our colored citizens, a picture of moral degradation, violence, decay to which they, like all other human beings, are subject. Such reading is not for children or adolescents or those who have not learned that the heart must be disciplined by knowledge of things to rend it if it is to perform its exalted function usefully. I want to underline this warning because I know very well that many people will be deeply shocked if they read this book, and I do not wish to be subject to the

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accusation of having praised it without putting them on their guard.

One wide river

In 1940 the Rockefeller Foundation, through the University of North Carolina, financed Mr. Redding in a project. "Go out into Negro life in the South. Go anywhere you like and see what you find." What he found is "No Day of Triumph."

The book begins with a brief autobiographical narrative intended to "place" the author, to tell the reader what sort of man this is, and why he can speak with authority, and what his natural biases of environment might be. Mr. Redding was brought up in what could be broadly characterized as a middle class family. Both his parents were people of education, and although they had to work very hard to achieve it, their economic status was far from desperate. They lived for many years in a white neighborhood. The father was a civil servant. From the outset the author came in contact with the cleavage which exists among his people between the very dark, the very negroid, and the lighter skinned, in whom the white strain of ancestry creates a visible mark of prestige. He had two living grandmothers to point the contrast. One of them, the darker, who was born in slavery and had had no particular "advantages" at any time in her life, seems somehow the more appealing figure, although she was not, what the more conventional Grandma Conway was, the sort of Negress nice white folks would have loved. I can do little better to indicate the quality of Mr. Redding's talents than to quote Grandma Redding's prayer, to which she was moved by the smooth flow of Grandma Conway's performance in the same line.

> Lis'en, Jesus. You wist I ain't got the words fer comp'ny prayers. This is all I want t'say. I been climbin' hills an' goin' down valleys be't sixty some years, an' the hills ain't no littler an' the valleys ain't no lesser. I ain't downright complainin', Jesus. I'm jes' tellin' You the way things is, be't You ain't been here in my lifetime. You ain't been here in be't than a thousan' years. Sence You been there, Gawd's done made a new lan' an' put a whole lot of diff'unt things an' people on it all together, an' we'se all steered up ever' which way. We had slav'ry sence You been here. That's mean business. Now we got something else, an' that's mean business too. Devilment an' hate an' wo' an' some being one thing an' some another, that's all bad, mean business. We'se all skiverin' an' steered up. It ain't t'beginnin' an' it ain't the close. You understan' what's on my mind, Jesus.
>
> Now, bless these young'uns. Bless 'em on earth. It don't matter 'bout us ol' ones. We'se skitterin' down the rocky hill anyhow. Bless us in the everlastin'. But these young'uns, they's climbin' up. All I ast be You keep 'em from knowin' an' the manbirthed sins o' blackness. We'se bent on knees to Your will, Lord Jesus. Amen.

You begin to detect the theme which runs through the whole book—the theme of terrible maladjustments, of neuroses and psychoses, which have their roots in artificial social divisions, as between whites and blacks, blacks and yellows, Jews and Christians, or any other groups you may think of. It has not infrequently been said that anti-Semitism is a disease of the mind. In the same way diseased minds can be produced by all group injustices. Mr. Redding tells how many suicides there were among the young men and women of his race who went to New England colleges at the same time as he did. The proportion is frightening.

He also tells a tale of prejudice in his Negro public school, where a very dark-skinned lad with great talent was deprived of a clearly-earned prize because he was too black, and he tells of the moral collapse and disintegration wrought by this.

Against such a personal background, his wanderings throughout the South on roving commission for the Rockefeller Foundation have more unity and poignancy. They are a series of observed episodes, a picaresque adventure through an unknown land.

Each incident is sharply etched, clings to the mind, invades the heart. We are shown the Negro college, with its strangely warped president. The farm hands loafing around the court house in Warrenton, Virginia, trying to pick up a day's work. The communist, Mike Chowan, who bummed himself a ride and who had fought in the Spanish Civil War. The prosperous doctor, who had sold his soul to mammon and created a textile mill for Negro girls which made his town the envy of its neighborhood. The men in this town, who could get no work and hence thought only of attaching themselves to the girls who made the most pay in the factory. There is no use continuing the list. As one leafs through the book after having read it, one is amazed at the richness, the wealth of observation it contains.

Perhaps as much as anything there stands out in one's mind Coe Harvis, the lawyer in the Blue Ridge mining town. Harvis is a drunk and a charitable man and a cynic. His "life does not make sense to you, or it makes the kind of sense a desert makes, or a dismal swamp—a sense too deep and cogent for you to know." Harvis takes Redding up into the hills to witness a church meeting. "I cannot describe that orgy, nor put into words the pulse of the strange, compelling rhythm. It went on and on inexhaustibly. It seemed to strip one. Tear one apart. No prayer had been offered, no hymn had been sung, but a great and red-eyed god had been invoked out of the dark forests of humanity's beginnings. Somehow it sickened me and shriveled me with shame. . . ."

The silver lining

It might legitimately be objected that "No Day of Triumph" is too pessimistic a book, that there

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is rottenness at the core of almost everything it describes. Perhaps the general situation of Negroes in America made this inevitable. There cannot be a great many of them truly happy. And yet two of the most moving passages you will find in its pages are passages of sheer joy and contentment and peace. There is the visit in the Kentucky farming country to the Phillipses. "They were sitting in their front yard. There were trees in the yard in front of the cottage, and they were sitting in a spot of sun that fell through the trees. They were simply sitting—she wide-legged, droop-shouldered, relaxed, her black hands limp in her lap and a pan of green stuff on the ground beside her, he straight and angular, but relaxed too, one leg thrown over the other and his foot swinging. They did not seem even to be watching the road. It was as if all the quiet of that golden afternoon flowed from their breathing. Behind them, their small, many-windowed cottage had turned quietly and evenly from white to gray, as if the gentle wash of quiet time alone had acted upon it."

These people owned their own farm. They loved to tease each other, he loved to tell tall tales. Their philosophy is simple, and can be expressed in two sentences. Speaking of the children who had gone to the city, Mrs. Phillips says, "But they're in this nation. . . . An' bein's they're in this nation, they can fin' a plat o' land somewhars. That's the beauty part about it. . . ." One wishes the philosophy were better founded on fact.

And there is the funeral of a local "character" further South, with the touching devotion of his family at his wake, so simple and compounded with food and drink and essential humanity.

But despite the peace Mr. Redding found, he reports mostly violence and poverty and worms gnawing at men's and women's hearts. In the end he comes to some sort of personal synthesis or resolution, prompted by dancing with a Louisiana girl named Menola Melancon, who was a waitress in a small town restaurant. Somehow she made him realize the truth of the sentences quoted toward the beginning of this article—that it is not enough to love only one's own, one must love as broadly as one can. And for some reason, Mr. Redding sees fit to end his book with his parting from her: "The mother gave me a box crammed with pralines. Menola pressed a medallion of St. Christopher in my hand."

Jolt from a Commuter

Victory through mass production and the future of man-centered economy.

By **Edward Skillin, Jr.**

IT had been a trying day. I settled back against the unyielding rattan seat of the 6:15 local, which was about to push out into the deepening gloom. Pencil in one hand and galleys for the magazine's forthcoming issue in the other, I was ready to pounce upon the first "typo" on galley 1. In the process I hoped that, as was often the case, one of the leading articles would revive my weary spirit.

After a few promising paragraphs a heavy-set commuter plumped himself down beside me just as the train began to move. "Glad I bumped into you," he mumbled, breathing heavily. "I've had a question I wanted to put to you for weeks. And it's a good one."

"Why, hello Bill, what's on your mind? Take your time; the trip's ahead of us. I wonder whether Pegler's dug up something again, or is it Mrs. Roosevelt?"

He relaxed a little and began slowly, "You never did take my views seriously enough; but then I'm only a business man. Are you being fair right now? You know I've always supported Mr. Roosevelt's foreign policy—reciprocal trade treaties and all. I don't follow Pegler or Eleanor too closely, though sometimes I see the *Telegram* at lunch time at the club. At night I always read the *Sun*. But all the papers must have carried the news I have in mind."

"I can't wait."

"Did you notice the latest report on production—planes, tanks, guns, ships? And have you seen how the American farmer is meeting his new Food for Freedom goals? Why, there'll be no stopping us now!"

"I hope it isn't going to take us too long," I replied rather glumly.

"Of course, of course. But the point I'm getting at is, where would our country be today if Borsodi and some of the people you talk about had had their way?"

"Fewer city slums?"

"Not exactly. What I mean is all that beautiful talk about personal responsibility and creative liv-

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ing—you know, all those recipes of decentralization, small factories, co-ops, productive homes, family-type and subsistence farms, back to the land and all that." Here the conductor reached for our tickets to provide a welcome interruption.

"We'd have less of a manpower problem and fewer transportation bottlenecks," I ventured.

"That's not what I mean," Bill snorted. "Nobody in the world can come within miles of us when it comes to production once we're under way. By spring the nazis will know the jig is up, if they don't already. Highly centralized mass production is the key to our strength; it is the bulwark of freedom against present and future Hitlers. We'd be a pushover if we had a peasant-type economy."

The pencil shot back into my pocket. "Not so fast, Bill. Irresponsible capitalism using highly centralized mass production was the very cause of the mass unemployment, the scramble for raw materials and markets, the widespread poverty and despair that made Hitler possible."

"I won't argue with you about that, though I can't say I agree. But let's start from today. If every American was busy plowing his own field and milling his own flour, it would be well nigh impossible to get the people worked up in favor of this war. And how would you build and man the necessary armament factories? What would we do without our present surpluses of wheat, corn and cotton? Go on from there. If after the war we revert to the small-time economy you advocate, how will we be strong enough to thwart the Hitlers sure to appear in coming decades? Your decentralized America would only be another Norway on a larger scale. Can't you see that this war shows unmistakably that you fellows are barking . . ."

Mercifully at this point the brakes were applied, the conductor shouted "Roseville Avenue" and with a hurried pat on the shoulder my lumbering friend and assailant vanished into the murk. But the challenge he had made refused to disappear with him.

* * *

It takes a while to draw up a convincing answer to this contention. The approach seems naturally to be threefold. First to consider what highly centralized mass production in field and factory means in human terms whether conducted for private profit, by State or municipality, or even perhaps if cooperatively owned by the workers themselves.

The factory system, as we have known it, has implied the large city—where due to poor housing, inadequate recreation, impersonal employer and neighborhood relationships, high cost of living and insecurity of employment the city family does not even reproduce itself. The city has been rightly called "the graveyard of the American family." (In the future, of course, mass production may itself be decentralized to some extent when rubber and gas again become plentiful. Then factory workers may own their own homes and garden plots. And with many products mass production is an advantage if not a necessity.) Mass production in the fields in most cases leads to depletion of the soil, rural slums, insecurity of tenancy, lack of health and educational facilities, seasonal unemployment and all the evils of migratory farm labor. Neither system even in the fattest years has been able to provide the subsistence of a decent minimum required as absolutely essential for the family by Christian social principles as expressed in recent social encyclicals. Or as Pius XII described it in his 1942 Christmas allocution: "a social order which has given such tragic proof of its ineptitude as a factor for the good of the people." When production is the end—as it must be in a war like this and in the rehabilitation period to follow—other considerations drop away. Plenty should be the aim of well-ordered society in time of peace. But the methods used in attaining adequate material production must be chosen on the basis of their social effects. Can there be distributive justice in a producers' rather than a consumers' world? The well-being of the human person, the family, the community obviously come first and these are seen to suffer so bitterly from the dehumanizing effects of centralized mass production in field and factory that when peace comes everything possible must be done to reverse the tendency toward further concentration so accelerated to meet war needs. The demobilization period must thus be one of intelligent decentralization. Unchecked capitalism and war comprise a vicious circle second in virulence only to totalitarianism and war.

On the other hand—and this is point two—the fate of Norway and other democracies where widespread private ownership had led to remarkable internal tranquillity in order teaches an unforgettable lesson. It is the sizable nugget of truth in my commuter friend's attack on certain forms of personalist-centered society. In these days of shrinking distances and mighty armaments it is impossible now to cultivate one's own field at peace with one's next door neighbors without a thought to the world outside. For the assured protection of the family and the community and the opportunity to work out worthwhile domestic social projects there are only two alternatives: (1) arming to the teeth, which means all the limitations imposed by the burden of armaments and vast stores of all manner of supplies, necessarily amassed by heightened mass production; (2) the establishing of an international confederation or world organization to which each nation would cede considerable sovereignty and contribute its share toward an international police

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force. Obviously there is but one choice.

That leads to the third and final point. Those who are engaged in the quest of safeguarding the rights of the human person in their own country and indeed the world over should be in the forefront of the movement to win a just and lasting peace. Cooperative communities, productive homes, family-type farms, good racial relations, the flowering of the common man will simply not be possible in a world where each nation or group of nations relies on its own armed might. They must be foregone for grimmer exigencies.

The present state of the human society means that leaders in the fields of agrarianism, cooperatives, housing, labor, public welfare, advocates of personalism and others must look beyond their immediate objectives to the world conditions which will make the attainment of their aspirations possible. And their participation in the peace movement can be an invaluable contribution to the establishment of a durable world peace. For to those who are so arduously intent on studying the organization of the peace—and the vast relief and rehabilitation program that are to accompany it—in the broadest terms, they can bring the results of their first-hand contacts with everyday problems, and their aims in terms of individual human beings, families and communities. Above all, adherents to the peace movement should include "those handfuls of men who, bent on bringing back society to its center of gravity which is the law of God, aspire to the service of the human person and of his common life ennobled in God." (The Pope's Christmas allocution).

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

THE SCRAP-BOOK type publication grandiloquently calling itself *Catholic International* announces in its second number that it will appear regularly as a monthly magazine beginning with the February issue, appealing "To all within the Mystical Body who sympathize with our aims" for subscriptions, at three dollars for twelve issues. "We cannot subsist without substantial support," is the accurate statement contained in the announcement. All who are, or who have been, concerned with the hazardous enterprise of launching a periodical will agree with at least that part of the *Catholic International's* plea.

When I briefly reviewed the first number of Mr. David Gordon's publication, I tried to express the sense of bewilderment it produced in me, as I tried to reconcile the lofty ideal proclaimed, namely, that "the object of this publication is not to placate the non-acceptors of Jesus Christ with concessions, but to monstrate and defend the eternal Catholic dogmas" with the ambiguous and deplorable assortment of innuendoes directed against Catholic prelates, clergymen, and laymen as well as many non-Catholics, who appear to Mr. Gordon, or to his anonymous "clerical direction" (proclaimed on the magazine's cover), as conscious or unconscious, but in both cases virulent, enemies of the Catholic Church. The second number increases the bewilderment. Not only because Mr. Gordon now underlines his specific intentions rhetorically informing his readers, through a letter addressed to me, that "the editors and sponsors of *Catholic International,* Mr. Williams, both clerical and lay, are up to and after the disinfection of our American Catholicity from the devil's scourge of *Liberal or Commonweal* Catholicity, which first appeared among us during this generation when you and Mr. George N. Shuster launched *Commonweal* in association with several Protestant gentlemen." That, to be sure, is decidedly specific, and decidedly serious, or would be serious, if it is true, or turns out to be true, that not Mr. Gordon, but his "clerical direction" are competent authorities in so grave a matter as the preferring of charges of heresy. But on that point, it seems best to await the emerging from anonymity of the "clerical direction," and of Mr. Gordon's "sponsors," both clerical and lay, from their present state of anonymity.

But when I find that Archbishop Lucey, and with him all those who have in any way cooperated with the National Conference of Christians and Jews, are also named as suspicious characters, or worse, in the *Catholic International,* my bewilderment cannot be wholly caused by the wholesale anathema pronounced against my own obscure person, and against all my past or present associates in the editorial direction of THE COMMONWEAL. Furthermore, when such veterans in Church work, including Catholic journalism, long established and highly regarded (as until now in common with most American Catholics I had regarded them), as Father LaFarge, executive editor of *America,* and Father Parsons, formerly editor-in-chief of *America;* the editors of the *New World,* Chicago Archdiocesan newspaper; M. Jacques Maritain and Raïssa Maritain, Ambassador to Spain Carlton J. H. Hayes, the editors of *Extension,* the magazine published in aid of the Church Extension Society, and one of the main instruments of the Home Missions of the Church in the United States, the editors of still another diocesan newspaper, the Catholic *Universe-Bulletin,* of Cleveland, Ohio, and a long list of other Catholic clergymen and laymen, also are the objects of this newest and most sweeping of editorial new brooms in "Catholic" journalism, my bewilderment is complete.

Nor do such items come near to completing my reasons for such a state of mind. If, for example, any Catholic, cleric or layman, or Catholic journal, official or not, really offends against "papal prohibitions" really applying in such a matter by "collaborating with non-Christians in inter-Faith Conferences," why then it would seem to follow that by regularly publishing the news releases of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, even the most widely circulated and probably the most influential of all diocesan journals, the Brooklyn *Tablet,* must incur the anathema of Mr. David Gordon, or his "clerical direction." Hot dog! That's a top kick to marvel at. It was

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in the *Tablet,* moreover, that I only recently read, just before reading the second number of Mr. Gordon's, or his "clerical director's," more than Papal bull, a communication from Archbishop Rommel, highly praising, as so many other Catholic clergymen have done, Franz Werfel's novel, "The Song of Bernadette." But to Mr. David Gordon, "this best seller has been the biggest calamity suffered by Catholic souls in America since the appearance of the heretical 'Keys of the Kingdom.'" The reason? "This volume is not directly and overtly heretical, as was 'Keys of the Kingdom.' But it is by a non-baptized person."

Another article much longer than the present might be drawn from the other material in the second number of this magazine tending to support very strongly the opinions expressed by many readers of Mr. Gordon's, or his clerical director's, views that—by means of the large amount of matter drawn from dubious sources, like the antique sensational novelist, Ouida, or wrenched from its proper context, like the accounts given of Father Hecker's work—American life, including a large portion of its Catholic life, here suffers castigation quite as severe, and practically identical with, the diatribes of the nazi and fascist enemies now striving to conquer this nation. Such a "slant" is more than visible; it screams and rants, to the total neglect of any single redeeming feature in either American life and society as a whole, or of its present desperate struggle to defend itself against its enemies, exterior and interior alike. But that slant can be left to those whose responsibility it is to preserve the decencies of journalism, in so far as journalism affects our national interests. What the present commentator, accused of being a prime agent of heresy against the Catholic Faith, together with so many other persons of far greater prominence and influence, is chiefly concerned to know, and what he asked in his first review of this mischievous magazine, and must ask again and again until answered definitely, is not only, "What are you really up to, Mr. Gordon?" but "Who are your clerical directors, or sponsors? By what authority other than your personal opinion as a layman, a writer, an editor, do you make such deadly serious charges of heresy and subversion of the Catholic Church against me? You assure me that I am 'remembered in your prayers.' I thank you, and will try to reciprocate. But I must still beg for the information here requested. Name your authority, reveal your commission, to set yourself up in business as a sort of one man Holy Office, only backed up, so far, by annoymous 'clerical direction,' and sponsors."

The Stage & Screen

The Three Sisters

PEOPLE of today, unused to materially pointless abstract thought and conversation, are spiritually lonely and gregarious. Consequently, of all audiences for a Chekhov play, such people are best suited to its full enjoyment. It is exhilarating to enter vicariously a drawing room from which there is almost entirely absent the noises made regarding clothes, marriages, divorces, deaths, births, operations and business which often pass for conversation.

The "Three Sisters" is really a matter of splendid talk and attitudes. Talk and attitudes by people of restraint, obedient to objective rules of duty and able to sustain objective burdens of suffering, the while rising superior to personal disasters produced by the requirements of duty and forming the substance of suffering. Failure for the sisters would be to concede ultimate value to passion or to be downed by the harsh unreason of those who obey no law beyond desire.

The three sisters are among the good people of the earth, whatever their momentary vanities. What is lofty and elegant forms them. Frustrated they are, but not from inner weakness. They suffer with dignity. Quite the contrary is their brother on whom the fortunes of the family had depended. He fails them and himself by reason of intrinsic unworthiness and brings to their lives a strident vulgarity in the form of a coarse wife.

Chekhov is always timely. The opinion which seems fairly general that the present play is irrelevant to modern life seems to me singularly inept. As presented by Katharine Cornell and directed by Guthrie McClintic it commanded the full if somewhat cerebral sympathies of the audience.

The sisters are played by Judith Anderson and Gertrude Musgrove in addition to Miss Cornell. Dennis King as Vershinin, the Colonel, who looks hopefully at the wonderful world of two or three hundred years from now, is very effective.

The Cornell treatment of Masha is quite majestic. She moves with marvelous grace delighting the eye, while, as always, she speaks as one able to translate into sound the most subtle variations of mood. This will stand among her finest performances and yet from the nature of the case she carries a rôle which does not permit her at all times to enjoy the spotlight. *(At the Ethel Barrymore.)*

Flare Path

"FLARE PATH" written by Terence Rattigan and produced by Gilbert Miller is another unsuccessful war play; this time about the RAF. It is tense enough and competently acted, but it lacks the character necessary for a *war* play. The action passes in a hotel at Milchester where a flying unit is lodged. The pilot (Alec Guinness) and his wife (Nancy Kelly) are for the moment together, she having come from London to announce her intention to return to an old lover (Arthur Margetson). The pilot studiously avoiding all display of emotion arising from his dangerous occupation is being secretly consumed by fear. Confession to his wife of his actual condition gives him release and leads her to sacrifice her own wishes so that the support her husband's nature craves shall not be withdrawn. Woven into the play is also a Cinderella theme involving the marriage of a Polish count and an English barmaid. The moral values present in the current war are absent from the play. Put another way: if you translate this play into German, give German names to the characters and set it in a town on the outskirts of

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Berlin you will not find it essential to make any material change in the lines. As a *war* play it is of neuter gender. It closed after a short run.

Sweet Charity

IMAGINE five "respectable" women, the executive committee of a small town charitable organization, who have lost to a judgment-creditor $2,500 collected by the club from the sale of dance tickets for an affair at which a celebrated band is supposed to play. The club has no other resources. The band manager demands money on the barrel head. The women must stall. Out of this dreary situation develop the following instruments of comedy: Lying, bribery, false representations, deceit, false arrest, false imprisonment, forgery and the issuance of a bad check. Only the authors (Irving Brecher and Manuel Seff) and the producer (George Abbott) could recognize this as a comedy. A piece of slapstick in Act II based on the effects of "reefers" accidentally smoked by three of the five ladies left the audience as cold as a mortuary.

After about seven performances this disappeared from the Mansfield Theater.

You'll See Stars

PROBABLY this is the all time low in musical comedies. Poor lyrics easily forgotten are sung to insipid unremembered music. The book is humorless, incoherent trash put forward as a biography of Gus Edwards to whom many stars, now fading, are indebted for early encouragement and training. When I viewed the horrible thing, the poor creatures who found themselves playing it were being slaughtered by stupid lines and senseless direction. They raced through the show in evident embarrassment. One whole scene was omitted, thank heaven. The conductor missed his cue. The electrician had to be prompted to put on the pit lights. Failure was so pronounced that the audience shuddered for the youngsters humiliated by appearing in such a theatrical monstrosity. I looked for talent somewhere and thought I saw it lurking in a young girl named Pat Marshall. On a hunch, I should say she has face, manner and temper which might equip her to become a comedienne some day. The book and lyrics are by Herman Timberg. Music is by Leo Edwards. *(After a few showings at the Maxine Elliott it closed.)*

JAMES N. VAUGHAN.

And Pine For What Is Not

BECAUSE everyone is popping at this time of the year with his list of "bests," I want to rush in with mine. Personally I think this kind of a thing is a pain in the neck. But, besides being fun to argue over, these "bests" serve one good purpose: they inform readers as to what their reviewer likes; then readers have some idea of how they might judge his future reviews. Here are the ten I liked best during 1942; they are not arranged in order of preference except for the first film named, which is decidedly my favorite of the year. "In Which We Serve," "Wake Island," "The Gold Rush," "This Gun For Hire," "Woman of the Year," "Yankee Doodle

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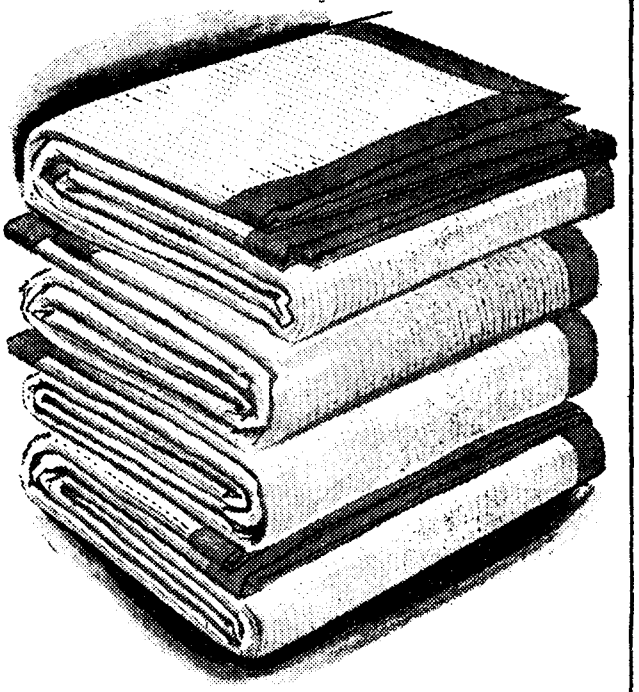

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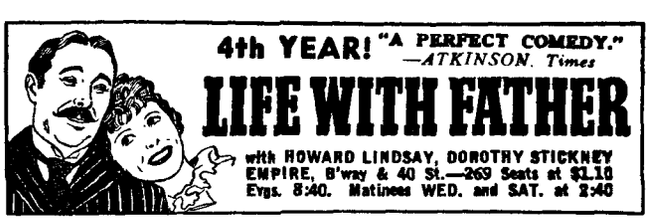
Dandy," "Mrs. Miniver," "The Magnificent Ambersons," "The Major and the Minor," "The Pied Piper." And now before the shrieks of protest come in, let's give a quick look at three new films that showed up at the turn of the year.

"Star Spangled Rhythm" is a sprightly film; it glitters almost as much as its name—but not quite. It is loaded with Paramount stars who drift in and out of the proceedings doing specialty numbers all over the place. However, it is too long and has perhaps too large a gallery of stars, just as if Paramount didn't want to offend any of its "names" by leaving one out. All these specialty acts are hinged on to a main theme. Eddie Bracken plays a sailor who comes on shore to visit his papa, Victor Moore, a watchman at the Paramount Studios. Since Papa has told Eddie that he is a big shot at Paramount, Eddie barges out to the studio with his sailor pals to see the sights—including Veronica Lake's other eye. Betty Hutton has a yen for Eddie; she fixes things so Papa can use the office of one of the big directors (Walter Abel). Of course, everything gets all jammed up—but not before the boys enjoy a studio tour which gives them and us a chance to learn a few things about film making, and to see and hear a couple of numbers including Mary Martin and Dick Powell singing "Bye, Bye, Baby'" and a very flossy musical comedy scene about the swing shift in an airplane plant. Directors Cecil De Mille and Preston Sturges play themselves and add to the fun. Betty Hutton, who never walks when she can run or whispers when she can shout, persuades a gallery of Paramount stars to put on a big entertainment in a Navy auditorium; and the last half of the film consists of these bright lights doing their stuff for the sailors. (I hope all the sailors are adults, because some of the acts are definitely not for children.) Zorina dances. Paulette Goddard, Dorothy Lamour and Veronica Lake sing the sad story of three unhappy ladies of the silver screen who want to act but are known only for their sarong, sweater and peek-a-boo-bang.

Bob Hope, who introduces most of the acts, shows in one of them an unfortunate incident of an air raid drill. Fred MacMurray, Franchot Tone, Lynn Overman and Ray Milland do an old Follies number called, "If Men Played Bridge As Women Do." The two best numbers of this de luxe potpourri are: a song and dance item with Eddie "Rochester" Anderson and Katherine Dunham (proving the advantages of a soldier's uniform over a zoot suit); and Bing Crosby's singing the big patriotic finale: "Old Glory." If your mood is for a revue splattered with cinema big-wigs, "Star Spangled Rhythm" gives it to you. George Marshall directed.


4th YEAR! "A PERFECT COMEDY." —ATKINSON, Times
LIFE WITH FATHER
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Producer Walter Wanger now takes a hand at sheer escapist entertainment, and turns to *"Arabian Nights"* for his theme. This is not the Arabian Nights of fantasy and wonder; it is rather based on the stories of dancing girls in harems, a cruel brother who wants to usurp the Caliph's throne and win the beautiful Scheherezade, bloody tortures, swords flashing in battle, various exhibitions of pride, lust for power, and base treachery. All this is wrapped up in many-hued technicolor appropriate to the lush sets, which include silken tents, a torture chamber, a slave mart and even a fur lined swimming pool! None of the designers' creations, however, can come up to the extraordinarily beautiful shots of the sand dunes and the charging horses in the exciting battle scenes.

The cast, under John Rawlins's direction, fit the needs of the story. Jon Hall is the handsome caliph who is done out of his throne by his vicious brother (Leif Erikson) who would stop at nothing to become the boss of Bagdad and marry the luscious dancing girl (Maria Montez). Cheerful, helpful Sabu comes to Jon's aid; so do a troop of circus performers. I wish the film told more of its story in action rather than having the actors sit around and talk about it. I also wish the comedy relief characters weren't quite so twentieth century slapstick. I'm not sure whom this Arabian Nights is supposed to please; the gore and harems are hardly for children; the cheesecake and tepid story will not win adults. You go at your own risk.

While *"American Empire"* is neither a super-Western nor the great cinema epic about the building of the West, it is more than just another rough and tumble cowboy affair. The details of its plot are somewhat over fanciful; but its broader scope, its scene of Texas after the Civil War, and particularly its theme about the two men who had the vision to go into the cattle business to build themselves an empire, merit your attention. Richard Dix plays the more cautious and considerate of the two, while Preston Foster, hard drinking, hairy chested and bursting with virility, is the more farsighted, bold and selfish in his schemes for expansion. The two boys sell their river boat, buy hundreds of Texas acres, stock them with ownerless cattle that roamed over the vast spaces of that state after the war. Large, powerful and rich grows the partners' empire. No doubt many a great American fortune started in such a way during the '60's and '70's.

But in this case, as time goes on, the neighbors and railroads demand consideration and land. The villain of the piece, Leo Carrillo, steps in to steal what he thought was his share of the cattle. The partners come to argument over how tyrannical and exclusive they can be on their private empire. But Foster is finally made to see democratic light after he finds himself fighting beside Dix and the townsfolk against a raid led by Carrillo. Harry Sherman's production, directed by William McGann, uses Texan scenery to the best advantage and for the big fight in the climax shows us some swell night riding shots in good out-door cinema technique.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Books of the Week

Good, but with a Grain of Salt

Stalin. Emil Ludwig. Putnam. $3.50.

EMIL LUDWIG is one of our contemporary authors who best combines the talents of a historian and a biographer with those of a brilliant journalist. He has the rare gift of describing men and events in a colorful and vivid style, yet never failing to give a psychological and historical analysis. In a word, Mr. Ludwig's books are never boring, without being superficial and "chatty."

His "Stalin" is no exception to the rule; it is an interesting psychological study and an excellent piece of journalism. Ludwig has had the opportunity of personally interviewing the Moscow dictator, a privilege rarely granted; insofar as we can judge from the author's account, the intercourse was as frank and unreticent as possible, considering that Joseph Stalin is about the most uncommunicative chief of state of our times.

The present Soviet ruler is one of the last "old Bolsheviks" who formed Lenin's direct entourage. His youth is linked to these early days of the revolution's "underground preparation." Later, we see him active once more at the hour of Bolshevik triumph; though at that time he still plays an obscure part, doing all the hard and unpleasant work, while others are surrounded with the glamor, and reap all the applause. At that time, the stubborn, patient and cunning Caucasian, whom Lenin compared to a "too spicy soup," was the champion of an international and pacifist régime, which caused the dismemberment of Russia at Brest-Litvosk. Today, Stalin is the leader of a national war, whose aim is to save Russia from dismemberment, and he is the head of an almost complete military dictatorship. It is truly extraordinary how he has survived and outlasted the various stages of the Russian revolution, the various civil wars, inside party struggles and the critical years of the "five year plans." As Emil Ludwig says, "Stalin's slow and cumulative energies" have permitted him "to succeed, where the most gifted rivals have failed."

Of these rivals, some have died natural deaths, others have been destroyed by Stalin. His dramatic struggle against Trotsky is described by Ludwig; so are the Moscow trials, which belong "to the dark streak of Stalin's life." This is a frank admission for the author who, "though an unconditional individualist and therefore not a communist," declares himself "irresistibly attracted by the social justice of that [i.e. communist] world." Because of this irresistible attraction, Ludwig often speaks both of Stalin and his régime in highly superlative tones. We much prefer the pages where he uses a more reserved and moderate language; the portrait he gives of the dictator in the beginning of his book is realistic enough:

> Stalin—we may well say it at the outset—makes a cold and alien impression; there is nothing about him that attracts. He does not come halfway to meet you; he is not open; he is cautious, unresponsive, and, for the most part, somber. When he laughs, it is with a grim, dark laughter. . . . There is nothing to indicate trust in men or friendship for them.

According to Ludwig, and we believe he is right, Stalin possesses "two qualities" of immense usefulness in his career: self-certainty and patience. In contrast to Hitler, who is nothing but nerves, Stalin is without nerves.

As to the author's further appreciations, they are, as we have said, too superlative, and even at times hyperbolic to be shared by a critical mind. The more so, because in praising Bolshevism and its achievements he is often content with bald statements of facts, which deserve a closer examination, or are not expounded in all their details. Thus, for instance, when Ludwig asserts that Stalin's Constitution is one of the most remarkable documents of our times, he does not tell us quite clearly enough why this outstanding example of Stalin's legislation has never been applied. It also seems to us that he justifies too easily the terrible calamities brought about in the USSR by forced collectivization. Admitting both the famines which marked this period and the peasants' desperate resistance to the Kolkhoz system, he still thinks that it is a good thing that all this happened. Had not Stalin interfered, the Russian peasant would have still dwelt in that backward state, where "he was differentiated from his cattle only by his worship of the icons."

This last statement is typical of certain Soviet admirers, for whom everything started in Russia with the Soviet régime, and all that is good in Russia is incarnated in this régime. For them, Russia, her national spirit and culture, her historical trends and popular aspirations, simply do not exist. At best, they are a convenient and picturesque background, a scenery staged for the play, but not necessarily determining its action. And yet, as the 25 years of Bolshevism have passed by, we could have seen Russia emerging from the shadows, coming back to life, with her authentic spiritual culture, and her unscathed historical traditions. The Metropolitan Nikolai of Kiev has recently recalled in his Christmas greetings the words of St. Alexander Nevsky: "God is not in strength, but in truth." It is not a soulless image, which the Russian people worships in its icons, but this God of truth and justice. And it is this spiritual dynamism which once more reveals itself on the battlefields of the Don and of the Volga. Today, Stalin's instinct has prompted him to follow, instead of opposing, this dynamism. The true greatness of a leader would consist in giving it a lasting expression.

HELEN ISWOLSKY.

BIOGRAPHY & HISTORY

On Borrowed Peace. Prince Hubertus zu Loewenstein. Doubleday. $3.00.

SO MANY books by European exiles and correspondents continue to roll, or flop like flapjacks, off our presses, and all are so equally "important and significant," that one hesitates to recommend another. But the Catholic student of such things should be interested in Prince Loewenstein's report of the years since his enforced departure from Germany in 1933.

A Catholic should be interested because "On Borrowed Peace" is a very Catholic book, full of the Catholic spirit and catholic (small c) interests, and even typical of Catholic ineffectuality in the face of the nazi-communist whirlwinds that have swept the Christian faith from the seats of authority in its ancient citadel, the continent of Europe.

Some will protest, however, that Prince Loewenstein is too left wing in his sympathies. Perhaps that is true. But he is still a good antidote for most of us, who are either too right wing in our sympathies or too unsympathetic—call it uncharitable, just to avoid arguments—toward both wings and most of the center.

Prince Loewenstein believes that Catholics very definitely belong in the fight, and he is not too critical of

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those he finds fighting beside him. So he rushes into Spain to support the Loyalists, for example, perhaps uncritically. He ignores communism pretty much because he is obsessed with the major danger, that of nazism. And yet everything he has said against totalitarianism in Central Europe applies equally well to Eastern Europe. In fact, it is really surprising that one with his imaginative sympathy could not imagine himself running afoul of the Red tyrant in the same way that he ran afoul of the Brown. Question: is it all right to be as critical of our brave Russian ally as we are of our brave British ally? At least there are things worth remembering.

But the Prince is interesting. He writes well. He knows a lot of interesting people, and some important ones. He gives you a good review of democratic bungling in the fatal years 1933-'39 and all the dismal Anglo-French-American indecision and weakness "right in der Feuhrer's face." (And again, sir, why forget Russia's crazy betrayal of August, 1939?)

For the last few years Prince Loewenstein has been lecturing as a Carnegie professor in American colleges. If I remember rightly, Assumption College in Canada is the only Catholic institution that has been able to forget about the Loyalists sufficiently to take advantage of the Prince's availability. This seems too bad. Not that he complains, but the man does have just the sort of provocative, well-informed, broad-horizoned, and withal Christian mind that would be most useful in our Catholic colleges. And he would remind us of what we are again tempted, and by some hysterical dopes even urged, to forget, namely, that there are plenty of decent Germans left in the world.

JOHN C. CORT.

The American Spirit. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard. Macmillan. $5.00.

THIS reviewer, being frankly sceptical of "civilizations," "genuine perils," democracies" and other words of wisdom as he contemplates Jacksonville, Florida, with its Negro ghetto, its militant but frequently misguided leaders of the working-class whites, and so on, is moved nevertheless to recommend this book by the Beards. For they have thrown into a fairly compact form the American mind: the thoughts that still move us to future action, either to victory or to ignominious defeat.

Thomas Paine saw America, the Beards summarize, as "more than a mere separation from England; it had been accompanied by 'a revolution—the principles and practices of government.' The spell of despotism once broken was continuing to dissolve." Yet, the Beards point out that "the social bond can never be broken" in quoting John Adams:

"Men in their primitive conditions, however savage, were undoubtedly gregarious; and they continue to be social, not only in every stage of civilization, but in every possible situation in which they can be placed."

Obviously, the masses of white Americans did not consider the Indians as "social"; nor the blacks they brought in as slaves; nor for a long time the white poor among their own number. Hence, the "rebellion" of the poor whites when they brought Andrew Jackson into power, and with him the demagogues of slave-ocracy, and at the same time swept great men into unmerited retirement, men like John Quincy Adams. But, in the words of the authors:

"Within twenty years"—from the time that Mr. Adams publicly declared his prophecy that in a "coming civil war slavery would be expelled from the whole continent"—"history-as-fact had vindicated John Quincy Adams on the slavery issue and impeached John C. Calhoun. If in his last years of despondency John Quincy Adams felt that his life in the public service had been a failure, that harsh judgment on his career should be attributed perhaps to the fact that his faith was not as strong as his vision was long and luminous."

The summary of the vivid picture of the early Republic might well be studied in the light of today's turmoil. State the authors:

"Having waged a successful revolution, having seen the American people escape the historic reaction of a military dictatorship when George Washington spurned the scepter, having labored for the institution and preservation of popular governments, the Americans who affirmed the idea of civilization in the United States in the early years of the Republic *were not closet philosophers—not intellectual dreamers mooning over theoretical Gardens of Eden. Behind their propositions was power of accomplishment. . . .*" (Italics mine).

Catholics will read with interest the behavior of many American converts to Catholicism: Orestes A. Brownson, for example, and the Reverend Thomas Scott Preston, also a convert, who won the reputation of being "rather more Catholic than the Pope." However, the Beards give especial attention to Reverend Francis X. Talbot's contribution to Harold Stearns's "America Now" (1938) and close with this evaluation:

". . . When he (Father Talbot) came to details, he condemned several features of American civilization: it was materialistic, naturalistic, rationalistic, and liberalistic. . . . Thus seventy-four years after the 'Syllabus of Errors' was issued, the conflict between primary Catholic dogmas and American civilization was by no means wholly resolved in theory or in practice."

This review does not treat adequately such a thorough probing of our mind and actions. The reviewer merely hints that it ought to contribute to a positive program for Catholic Actionists who love America.

GEORGE STREATOR.

De Laudibus Legum Anglie. Sir John Fortescue. Cambridge. $6.00.

AS the General Editor of the Cambridge Studies in English Legal History observes, Dr. Chrimes's edition of Fortescue's "De Laudibus Legum Anglie" has been prepared from the earliest extant manuscripts with a precision of textual scholarship and a scrupulous regard for historical accuracy. Facing the Latin text is a fresh translation which retains the original's simple and vigorous style, and is redolent with its quaint medieval flavor. The editor's critical annotation of this extraordinary tract, written in the grand thomist tradition during the revival of English legal studies in the late 15th century, is based on the discoveries and conclusions of modern scientific research.

The influence which that old and doughty Catholic chancellor of England wielded during his lifetime is nothing compared to that which he exerted throughout the centuries. Though a pioneer in comparative legal studies, the sociology of law, and the law of pleading and practice, Fortescue's most significant contributions were made in the field of constitutional law. He it was who deliberately set about to write the first systematic work on the secular public law of England, a work which drew heavily from Saint Thomas Aquinas; but which was bottomed

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upon direct observation and close examination of the social and political realities of medieval England. The kernel of his doctrine is that the King is subject not only to the divine and natural laws and the statutes; the king's power is limited by parliament. He expressed this by the formula that England is a *dominium politicum et regale,* not a *dominium regale;* a phrase which he lifted bodily from the "De Regimine Principium." But Sir John gave life, political validity and historical pertinacity to the thomist abstraction.

That the publication of Dr. Chrimes's edition of the "De Laudibus" meets the exacting standards of the critical student and satisfies the fastidious taste of antiquarian curiosity is for us not as important as that it makes available to a wider public a classic whose doctrine fed the roots of Anglo-American constitutionalism.

PRIVATE JOSEPH CALDERON.

A History of Social Thought. Paul Hanley Furfey. Macmillan. $2.75.

THERE are two wonders here. The first is that anyone should attempt such a gargantuan task. For this little volume is as ambitious as its title, and social thought, by definition, is not to be confined to academic sociology, but is "to cover all thinking about human group activities." It is the crystallized social experience of the race and "includes the history of sociology, of economics, of political science and also the history of religions, of education, of philosophy and even of literature and other disciplines, in so far as they deal with the group life." Hence the field will embrace a code of laws, a campaign speech, an international treaty, a consitution, even a drama or a novel; and this, not of one culture or one period, but of all human life. There is little surprise when the author informs us that volumes of this nature are rare; it is astonishing that anyone should assume the burden.

The second wonder is that anyone should succeed as well as Dr. Furfey has in this text. His competence in his field is well established. Apart from his recognized scholarship, he has evinced a practical interest in social problems, as his works with the Negroes in Washington attests. But more than academic maturity was needed to write this volume. Its most attractive characteristic is its organization and balance. He performs marvels of compression, and rarely distorts; he writes from a frankly Catholic viewpoint, yet never fails to do justice to an opposed opinion. Moving up through the ages from the prehistoric to World War II, and pausing to consider the most diverse social phenomena, he displays a judicious moderation that is truly remarkable.

The author would be the first to admit that he has given us merely a skeleton which needs the flesh of collateral reading. This is implied in an excellent bibliographical essay and in comprehensive footnotes which point the way to fuller interpretation. Occasionally he slips into a questionable generalization. He states that society was "in a stable equilibrium" in the Middle Ages until the second half of the thirteenth century, and he oversimplifies the work of Petrarch. But such doubtful statements are refreshingly rare.

This is a period of manuals and outlines. There was a similar wave of such productions at the time of the decline of classical culture in the West. Then it was man's desire to salvage the essentials of that culture which seemed too broad to be comprehended in its entirety. Today a growing specialization creates the same demand, particularly in

"This Publishing Business"

HYMNS TO THE CHURCH

The Communist is a man who has seen a vision, the vision of a kingdom on earth. Its essence is in a phrase Our Lady uttered 2000 years ago:

He hath put down the mighty from their seat
And hath exalted the humble.
He hath filled the hungry with good things:
And the rich He hath sent empty away.

Now you cannot meet a vision with arguments, but only with a more splendid vision. And we have one—the vision of a kingdom on earth, a vision of which the Communist's is actually one ray.

It is our tragedy that we have got used to our vision. We see the Church as dusty and a little soiled with earthly polity. We see her through a haze of Popes and Bishops —saintly Popes obscuring our vision almost as much as bad Popes. We scarcely see the Church for her members.

That is what makes Gertrud von le Fort's HYMNS TO THE CHURCH so important. She sees THE CHURCH, and she makes us see it as no poet has shown it to us for centuries.

I have fallen on the law of your faith as on a sharp sword.
Its sharpness went through my understanding,
straight through the light of my reason.
Never again shall I walk under the star of my eyes,
and on the staff of my strength.

She sees the living splendour of the Church, for the Church is Christ living in His members.

But strength still goes out from your thorns and
from your abysses the sound of music.
Your shadows lie on my heart like roses and
your nights are like strong wine.
I will love you even when my love of you is ended.
I will desire you even when I desire you no more . . .
Where my feet refuse to take me, there will I kneel down.
And where my hands fail me, there I will fold them.

She sees the powers of this world pathetic in their littleness:

You throw nations down before you that you may save them
You bid them rise up that they may work their salvation.
See, their boundaries are like a well of shadow in your
sight and the roar of their hate is like laughter,
The clash of their weapons is like tinkling glass
and their victories are as tapers in small chambers.

She sees the scattered truths of mankind, and the Church able to complete even those truths which know nothing of her:

All the wisdom of man has been learned from you.
You are the hidden writing under all their signs.
You are the hidden current in the depths of their waters.
You are the secret power of their enduring.

Nor is her vision only of power and majesty: the Church speaks to her children on another note:

He has come over me as buds come on a spray, He has
sprung forth in me like roses on the hedgerows.
I bloom in the red-thorn of His love, I bloom
in all my branches in the purple of His gifts.
I bloom with fiery tongues, I bloom with flaming
fulfilment, I bloom out of the Holy Spirit of God.

F. J. S.

"HYMNS TO THE CHURCH" by
Gertrud von le Fort, $1.50.

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the "newer" social sciences such as sociology, which is so loosely delimited. Histories of this subject have been disappointing, chiefly because the authors have not been sufficiently grounded in historical methodology. The present volume, resting on sound scholarship, meets a real need.

JOSEPH N. MOODY.

MISCELLANEOUS

The World's Great Catholic Literature. George N. Shuster. Macmillan. $3.00.

MR. SHUSTER states the purpose of his anthology: "to illustrate the impact of Catholic thought and feeling upon literature since the time of the Apostles." No one could introduce such a book more appropriately than William Lyon Phelps, who assures us that Mr. Shuster's labors are no mere panegyric of the dead but that they are a discursive inventory of the assets of a going concern. With delicate satire he recalls some of the prophets who, even in his own lifetime, waited for the death of the Church.

Mr. Shuster has singular, though not unique, qualifications for the task he undertook. He has versatility and depth. He is a student, but not a recluse. He understands the mission of the Church and how it has been fulfilled, and he knows the needs of the world. He manifests an intelligent zeal, and yet he has the caution that forestalls the disillusionment that often waits on the enthusiastic. He knows the Church is not the congregation of the just, and that in her broad acres wheat and cockle flourish simultaneously. He illustrates this with passages from Saint Jerome in the fourth century, Lord Acton in the nineteenth, and Pastor in the twentieth. Readers of THE COMMONWEAL and a much wider circle know how varied are his interests and how extensive his reading.

Although the average reader will probably give most of his attention to the modern writers it would be a mistake to overlook the passages dealing with the earlier periods. They illustrate the fertility and exuberance of the Christian idea as described by Newman, the abounding spirituality of Christianity, which Dawson stresses so much, and what Matthew Arnold wistfully refers to as the enchantment of the Middle Ages.

More than half the books deals with prose writers who flourished after the French Revolution, and practically all the great Catholic writers, except the living, are represented. In the selections from this period we can trace the development of the difficulties which have culminated in our present plight. We see how they were anticipated and what measures were taken for their solution. A wider use of the material Mr. Shuster has assembled could have provided much effective defense against the torrent of pagan literature the various modern anti-Christian revolutions have let loose. Because of this treason of the clerks science, literature, and art have assailed Christianity with matricidal fury, and the most vociferous champions of freedom have been fanatical in their attempts to destroy the institution which made freedom possible. The peace note of Benedict XV is included, and it makes sad reading.

An anthology is primarily a reflection of the compiler's personal taste and inevitably few will agree to all the selections. If we judge some of Mr. Shuster's selections by the standard he set for himself it is difficult to understand their inclusion. Pope, in spite of his genius, hardly merits a place here. The selection from him describes two lovers who were killed by lightning, and might be found useful by those who inveigh against the dangers of "company keeping." The passage from Macaulay is the tribute of a man who simply had to admire the longevity and triumph of the "absurdity" known as Catholicism, and illustrates at its best what one critic has called his "fine detestable prose." The exquisite passage from Pater is a pensive flirtation with "the Grand Perhaps" in which the administration of the last sacraments is made to serve the purpose of art rather than of salvation. Newman is represented by three famous passages of which only the first, entitled "A Catholic's Faith," concerns Christianity. His "Farewell to Oxford," moving though it is, merely shows what he gave up to become a Catholic. His "Gentleman" was intended to show the possibilities of paganism. Manning is represented by a charming passage that is not at all characteristic of his subtlety and power. The selection from Gerard Manley Hopkins is one in which he excels Ruskin in the observation of nature; but in spiritual significance it is surpassed by many of his writings.

The modern spiritual writers, who have so much solace and encouragement to offer, are not well represented. Certainly, many of them manifested a banality and barrenness that merited the disdain with which they were regarded, and this synchronized with the materialism and infidelity that accompanied the spread of the evolutionary hypothesis. The "Origin of Species" and the higher critics are responsible for a decline in the popularity of the Bible from which it has not recovered. But in the meantime, writers like Butler, Goodier, Marmion, and Grandmaison have written of spiritual things with a distinction which compelled the attention of the literary world and awakened in many a longing for their lost inheritance. That longing helps to explain the success of "Grey Eminence" and "The Song of Bernadette." Bremond receives less space than Heywood Broun or Baron Corvo.

But these are matters of taste and emphasis which do not detract from the value of this book. While there will be many ready to suggest emendations yet few have the talent or the time to compile an anthology, and all ought to be grateful to Mr. Shuster for assembling so many treasures for the benefit of the English-speaking world.

FLORENCE D. COHALAN.

BRIEFERS

The Music Goes Round. F. W. Gaisberg. Macmillan. $3.00.

THIS is one of those books that sound as if someone had said to the author: "You ought to write a book!" Carried by acclamation!—but the trouble is that Mr. Gaisberg, or his ghost, really does not know how to write a book. *"The Music Goes Round"* describes the rise of the phonograph recording industry, and the author's interesting and useful rôle therein. There are revealing anecdotes about such recording artists as Caruso, Patti, Chaliapin; but the tale is dull and poorly organized.

The Background and Recent Status of Collective Bargaining in the Cotton Industry in Rhode Island. Rev. Edmund J. Brock, M.S.S.W. Catholic University.

IT IS extremely heartening to see that labor and its problems furnish so many subjects for doctoral dissertations by priests studying at the graduate school of Catholic University. We can think of few better ways to develop an informed social consciousness among our priesthood.

As the critics say, Father Brock's opus is "the definitive book" on its subjects. And his sympathies are where they should be, with the underpaid, still mostly unorganized men and women who work in the cotton textile mills.

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The Inner Forum

Hands Across the Channel

BLACKFRIARS, notable English monthly, is conducting among its readers a remarkably thoughtful campaign on behalf of their fellow-Dominicans in France now languishing—a great proportion of them—in "prisons and prison camps." They do this not only out of affection for the men in their order, but as a means of manifesting their gratitude to the present-day Catholics of France, to whom the Church the world over owes so much. The December issue laments the publications of which the English Dominicans have been deprived since the spring of 1940.

The editors mention specifically "scholarly thomist reviews that had so much influence on Catholic thought: the *Revue Thomiste, Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, Bulletin Thomiste,* etc., the Scriptural work carried on at Jerusalem and given to us in the *Revue Biblique;* the theological studies appearing in the fascicules of the *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique;* and particularly the reviews of contemporary life and action that have made a permanent impression on Catholic life, *La Vie Intellectuelle, La Vie Spirituelle, Temps Présent, Revue des Jeunes,* etc." Such figures as Père Congar, O.P., whose field was the background for the reunion of Christendon and the scholars Père Sertillanges and Père Chenu are mentioned by name and with gratitude.

The main thing *Blackfriars* is asking of its readers is to assist in building up collections of current books and magazines that were and will again be so useful in the various French Dominican houses devoted to intellectual labors. Specifically mentioned are such British reviews as: *Nature, English Historical Review, Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly, Journal of Theological Studies,* and 1941-1942 issues of *Blackfriars* itself. "Catholics in England, in spite of two and a half years of separation, have found it impossible themselves to supply the theological, philosophical and ascetical articles that were provided by the French Dominicans, so that their intellectual work will certainly be necessary in the work of reconstruction after the war."

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. H. A. REINHOLD is now station at Yakima, Washington. "Parousia" is a sequel to his "The Spirit of the Roman Liturgy," which appeared in the January 1 issue of THE COMMONWEAL.

Lt. S. V. MORRIS is in the Army Air Corps.

Helen ISWOLSKY is the daughter of the well-known Russian statesman. She is the author of "Light Before Dusk" and "Soviet Man Now."

John C. CORT, labor journalist and one of the founders of the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, will shortly join the staff of THE COMMONWEAL.

George STREATOR is employed by the labor section of the War Production Board.

Pvt. Joseph CALDERON, formerly a frequent contributor and staff member, sends us this review from an undesignated island in the South Pacific, where he is serving with the Armed Forces.

Rev. Joseph N. MOODY, formerly on the faculty of Cathedral College, New York, and instructor in Catholic labor schools, is on active service as a Navy chaplain.

Rev. Florence D. COHALAN teaches at Cathedral College, and often contributes to THE COMMONWEAL.

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SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to The Rev. Edward F. Garesché, S.J., President of The Catholic Medical Mission Board, 10 West 17th St., New York, N. Y.

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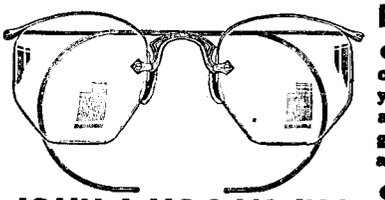

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—is revealingly set forth in the current (December 28) issue of THE CO-OPERATOR, bi-weekly newspaper of the Eastern Co-operative Wholesale.

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